

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as shown on the attached marked-up copy to read as follows:

56. (Currently Amended) A purified polypeptide, wherein said purified polypeptide is expressed by a recombinant cell host, and

wherein said recombinant cell host contains a polynucleotide,

wherein said polynucleotide comprises a nucleotide subsequence,

wherein said polypeptide is encoded by said nucleotide subsequence, and

wherein said nucleotide subsequence is selected from the group consisting of:

a) the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO 1;

b) the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO 2, or a biologically active polynucleotide derivative of SEQ ID NO 2;

c) the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO 3, or a biologically active polynucleotide derivative of SEQ ID NO 3;

d) the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO 4; and

e) a nucleotide sequence having at least 12 consecutive nucleotides of a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO 2, SEQ ID NO 3, and SEQ ID NO 4;

~~f) a nucleotide sequence having a sequence fully complimentary to a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO 2, SEQ ID NO 3, and SEQ ID NO 4; and~~

~~g) a nucleotide sequence hybridizing under stringent hybridization conditions with a polynucleotide selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO 2, SEQ ID NO 3, and SEQ ID NO 4.~~

57. (Previously Amended) A purified polypeptide of Claim 56 which is selected from the group consisting of:

- a) a polypeptide which comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO 5;
- b) a polypeptide comprising from amino acid in position 1 to amino acid in position 48 of SEQ ID NO 5;
- c) a polypeptide comprising from amino acid in position 60 to amino acid in position 100 of SEQ ID NO 5;
- d) a polypeptide comprising at least one antigenic portion of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO 5;
- e) a polypeptide comprising at least one antigenic portion of the amino acid sequence from amino acid in position 1 to amino acid in position 48 of SEQ ID NO 5; and
- f) a polypeptide comprising at least one antigenic portion of the amino acid sequence from amino acid in position 60 to amino acid in position 100 of SEQ ID NO 5.

58. (Currently Amended) An oligomeric polypeptide comprising at least two epitope units of a polypeptide according to Claim 57.

59. (Currently Amended) The oligomeric polypeptide of Claim 58 comprising up to 10 epitope units of a polypeptide according to Claim 57.

60. (Currently Amended) A purified polypeptide comprising at least one antigenic portion of a polypeptide ~~according to Claim 57~~ of sequence SEQ ID NO 5.

61. (Previously Added) The purified polypeptide according to Claim 60, wherein an antigenic portion of the polypeptide of sequence SEQ ID NO 5 is selected from the group consisting of:

- a) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO 6;
- b) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO 7;
- c) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO 8;
- d) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO 9;

- e) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO 10;
- f) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO 11;
- g) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO 12; and
- h) the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO 13.

62. (Previously Added) The purified polypeptide according to Claim 60, comprising from 2 to 10 antigenic portions of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO 5.

63. (Previously Added) A purified polypeptide or an oligomeric polypeptide according to any one of Claims 56 to 62 which is a multiple antigen peptide construct.

64. (Previously Added) A purified polypeptide or an oligomeric polypeptide according to any one of Claims 56 to 62 which comprises an additional T-epitope.

65. (Previously Added) An immunogenic composition, comprising a purified polypeptide or an oligomeric polypeptide according to any one of Claims 56 to 62.

66. (Previously Added) A composition comprising a purified polypeptide or an oligomeric polypeptide according to any one of Claims 56 to 62.

67. (Previously Added) The composition according to Claim 66, wherein said composition comprises additionally an antigenic protein from *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* or an antigenic portion of an antigenic protein from *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

68. (Previously Added) The composition according to Claim 67, wherein said composition comprises additionally the ESAT-6 antigenic protein or an antigenic portion of the ESAT-6 protein.

69. (Previously Added) A diagnostic method for detecting the presence of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in the serum of a patient, said diagnostic method comprising the steps of:

a) incubating a serum sample which may contain *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* antibodies with a purified polypeptide or an oligomeric polypeptide according to any one of Claims 56 to 62, for a time sufficient to form an antigen-antibody complex between said *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* antibodies and said purified polypeptide or oligomeric polypeptide;

b) detecting any said antigen-antibody complex formed; and

c) relating the detection of said antigen-antibody complex to the presence of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*

81 70. (Previously Added) A diagnostic kit for the in vitro diagnosis of an infection by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, comprising the following elements:

a) a purified preparation of a purified polypeptide or an oligomeric polypeptide according to any one of Claims 56 to 62;

b) suitable reagents for detecting any antigen/antibody complexes formed, said reagents preferably carrying a label compound, or being recognized themselves by a labeled reagent;

c) optionally, a reference biological sample containing a polyclonal or monoclonal antibody recognizing the purified polypeptide or the oligomeric polypeptide of step a) (positive control); and

d) optionally, a reference biological sample that does not contain a polyclonal or monoclonal antibody recognizing the purified polypeptide or the oligomeric polypeptide of step a) (negative control).

71. (Previously Added) A purified polypeptide encoded by the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID 1, 2, 3, or 4.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENTS

Claims 56 and 58-60 have been amended.

Support for amended Claim 56 can be found in the same claim, as previously filed.

The amendment of Claims 58 and 59 is supported by page 31, lines 15-28 and page 36, lines 19-27. Claims 57 and 60 as originally presented support the amendment of Claim 60.

No new matter has been added by the present amendment.